

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN
AT LAW AND IN ADMIRALTY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case No.

APPROXIMATELY \$13,800.00 IN UNITED
STATES CURRENCY FROM TD BANK
ACCOUNT ENDING IN 8567,

Defendant.

VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL FORFEITURE IN REM

The United States of America, by its attorneys, Matthew D. Krueger, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, and Scott J. Campbell, Assistant United States Attorney for this district, alleges the following in accordance with Supplemental Rule G(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure:

Nature of the Action

1. This is a civil action to forfeit property to the United States of America for violations of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

The Defendant In Rem

2. The defendant approximately \$13,800.00 in United States currency was seized on or about February 15, 2019, when the United States Secret Service received a check in that amount from TD Bank, following the Secret Service's execution of seizure warrant #18-958M, on the bank, on December 14, 2018, in West Palm Beach, Florida.

3. United States Magistrate Judge Nancy Joseph of the Eastern District of Wisconsin had issued that warrant on December 14, 2018. The warrant authorized the seizure of \$13,800 from TD Bank account ending in 8567, held in the name of Easy Freight Shippers LLC.

4. The defendant property was seized in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, and is presently in the custody of the United States Secret Service in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Jurisdiction and Venue

5. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over an action commenced by the United States under 28 U.S.C. § 1345, and over an action for forfeiture under 28 U.S.C. § 1355(a).

6. This Court has *in rem* jurisdiction over the defendant property under 28 U.S.C. § 1355(b).

7. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C. § 1355(b)(1) because the acts or omissions giving rise to the forfeiture occurred, in part, in this district.

Basis for Forfeiture

8. The defendant property is subject to forfeiture under Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981(a)(1)(C) and 984, because it constitutes or was derived from proceeds traceable to an offense constituting “specified unlawful activity” – as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(c)(7), with reference to Title 18, United States Code, Section 1961(1) – namely, wire fraud, committed in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

Facts

Background

9. According to an August 15, 2011 press release issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, online vehicle shoppers are being victimized by fraudulent online sales schemes in

which the lister offers a vehicle for sale, and induces the victim to pay for the vehicle, but never delivers the vehicle to the victim. The seller attempts to add credibility to the sale by misusing the names of reputable companies and programs to complete the sale.

10. Fraudulent online sales on e-commerce platforms often involve expensive items such as cars, boats, recreation vehicles, and heavy construction equipment because fraudulently offering more expensive items for sale as a part of a fraud scheme offers the fraudster the potential of realizing a larger financial gain from the fraud.

11. Heavy-equipment fraud schemes typically have the following characteristics: the item is usually listed for sale at a relatively low price and the seller wants to conduct business via bank wire transfers. The seller sometimes offers free shipping to the buyer.

12. EBay provides buyer protection only for vehicles purchased on their e-commerce website – but not for purchases made via a different e-commerce website such as Craigslist. For that reason, EBay advises on its website that if a Craigslist or a non-eBay seller “promises” the eBay protection plan for a sale not made via Ebay, that offer is fraudulent.

Opening of TD Bank account ending in 8567

13. TD Bank account ending in 8567 (“TD 8567”) was opened on or about October 1, 2018, in North Miami, Florida.

14. The sole account holder of TD 8567 is Easy Freight Shippers LLC, 333 SE 2nd Avenue, Suite 2000, Miami, Florida.

November 5, 2018 wire transfer of \$13,800.00 to TD 8567

15. On or about November 2, 2018, a victim having the initials “R.P.” who resides in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, saw an excavator for sale on the e-commerce website Craigslist.

16. R.P. is an owner of the company having the initials “S.R.K.P.S.,” which is located in the Eastern District of Wisconsin. S.R.K.P.S. uses excavation equipment when performing certain services for its customers.

17. R.P. sent an email to the seller of the excavator that was listed for sale on Craigslist.

18. The seller of the excavator replied to R.P. with an email identifying herself as “Anna” and stated that she was selling a 2014 Caterpillar 304E excavator for \$13,800.00.

19. In her email, “Anna” told R.P. the following:

- A. A trailer was included with the excavator.
- B. “Anna” was selling the excavator because “Anna’s” husband had died and “Anna” had throat cancer.
- C. The excavator was in Sioux City, Iowa.
- D. The excavator would be shipped to R.P. free of charge.
- E. “Anna” had signed a contract with eBay to take care of selling the excavator.
- F. The buyer of the excavator would have a five-day inspection period, and if the buyer decided not to buy the excavator, the buyer could ask for a refund.

20. Based, among other things, on the false and fraudulent representations in “Anna’s” email set forth in paragraph 19, R.P. agreed to buy the excavator. R.P. then received a spoofed eBay email that included the following:

- A. A copy of the eBay buyer protection plan.
- B. Invoice No. 186943726839 issued to R.P. in the amount of \$13,800.00 for purchase of the excavator.
- C. Instructions stating that R.P. must pay for the excavator through a bank wire transfer to TD 8567.

D. A customer support number of (888) 520-3229.

21. On November 5, 2018, based on the false and fraudulent representations set forth in paragraphs 18 through 20, R.P. wire transferred \$13,800.00, from R.P.'s business account held at a Tri City National Bank branch located in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, to TD 8567 as payment for the excavator.

22. Between November 5, 2018, and at least April 4, 2019, R.P. has not received the excavator and "Anna" has not repaid R.P. any money.

23. R.P. was the victim of a fraud scam.

24. The \$13,800.00 that R.P. wire transferred to TD 8567 on November 5, 2018, constituted proceeds of that fraud scam.

25. The defendant property constitutes or is traceable to R.P.'s November 5, 2018 wire transfer of \$13,800.00 to TD 8567.

Investigation into Anna C. and (888) 520-3229

26. Anna C. of 27XX S. Paxton St., Sioux City, Iowa – the person believed to be the fraudulent seller of the alleged excavator to R.P. – has numerous fraud reports filed in relation to the online sale of heavy equipment through eBay.

27. The eBay Customer Support number (888) 520-3229, referenced in paragraph 20, had numerous fraud reports in which buyers were scammed out of money for the purchases of motor equipment on eBay and Craigslist.

Warrant for Arrest In Rem

28. Upon the filing of this complaint, the plaintiff requests that the Court issue an arrest warrant *in rem* pursuant to Supplemental Rule G(3)(b), which the plaintiff will execute upon the defendant property pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1335(d) and Supplemental Rule G(3)(c).

Claim for Relief

29. The plaintiff repeats and incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

30. By the foregoing and other acts, the defendant property constitutes or was derived from proceeds traceable to specified unlawful activity, namely, wire fraud, committed in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343, and is therefore subject to forfeiture to the United States of America under Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981(a)(1)(C) and 984, with cross-references to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1956(c)(7) and 1961(1).

WHEREFORE, the United States of America prays that a warrant of arrest for the defendant property, approximately \$13,800.00 in United States currency from TD Bank account ending in 8567, be issued; that due notice be given to all interested parties to appear and show cause why the forfeiture should not be decreed; that judgment declare the defendant property to be condemned and forfeited to the United States of America for disposition according to law; and that the United States of America be granted such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and equitable, together with the costs and disbursements of this action.

Dated at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this 4th day of April, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

MATTHEW D. KRUEGER
United States Attorney

By:

s/SCOTT J. CAMPBELL
SCOTT J. CAMPBELL
Assistant United States Attorney
Scott J. Campbell Bar Number: 1017721
Attorney for Plaintiff
Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin
517 East Wisconsin Avenue, Room 530
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
Telephone: (414) 297-1700

Fax: (414) 297-1738
E-Mail: scott.campbell@usdoj.gov

Verification

I, Jason Vanderwerff, hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that I am a Detective with the West Allis Police Department, currently assigned to the United States Secret Service Milwaukee Resident Office Financial Crimes Task Force (“MFCTF”), that I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint for Civil Forfeiture *in rem* and know the contents thereof, and that the factual matters contained in paragraphs 9 through 27 of the Verified Complaint are true to my own knowledge.

The sources of my knowledge are the official files and records of the United States, information supplied to me by other law enforcement officers, as well as my investigation of this case, together with others, as a Detective with the MFCTF.

I hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: 4-4-19

s/JASON VANDERWERFF

Jason Vanderwerff
Detective
United States Secret Service Milwaukee Resident
Office Financial Crimes Task Force

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

Place an "X" in the appropriate box: Green Bay Division Milwaukee Division

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff _____
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)
Scott J. Campbell, AUSA
US Attorney's Office, #530 Federal Building
517 E. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202 (414-297-1700)

DEFENDANTS

APPROXIMATELY \$13,800.00 IN UNITED STATES CURRENCY
FROM TD BANK ACCOUNT ENDING IN 8567County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Burlington, New Jersey

(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF
THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 U.S. Government Defendant	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

	PTF	DEF		PTF	DEF
Citizen of This State	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Citizen of Another State	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Foreign Nation	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance	PERSONAL INJURY	PERSONAL INJURY	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act
<input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine	<input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane	<input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158	<input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment
<input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157	<input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust
<input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument	<input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander	<input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability	PROPERTY RIGHTS	<input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking
<input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment	<input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights	<input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce
<input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine	<input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending	<input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent	<input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excl. Veterans)	<input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage	<input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark	<input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations
<input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	LABOR	<input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit
<input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits	<input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 390 Other Personal Injury	SOCIAL SECURITY	<input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV
<input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract	<input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury	<input type="checkbox"/> 395 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange
<input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Med. Malpractice	<input type="checkbox"/> 400 Other Civil Rights	<input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff)	<input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions
<input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise		<input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting	<input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923)	<input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts
		<input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))	<input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters
		<input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/ Accommodations	<input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Mgmt. Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act
		<input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration
		<input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure
		<input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education	<input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation	Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision
			<input type="checkbox"/> 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)
				<input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609
			IMMIGRATION	FEDERAL TAX SUITS
			<input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application	<input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)
			<input type="checkbox"/> 463 Habeas Corpus - Alien Detainee (Prisoner Petition)	<input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609
			<input type="checkbox"/> 530 General	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	
			<input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions	

V. ORIGIN

(Place an "X" in One Box Only)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 Original Proceeding	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Removed from State Court	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Remanded from Appellate Court	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Reinstated or Reopened	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Transferred from another district (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Multidistrict Litigation
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Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):
18 U.S.C. §§ 981(a)(1)(C) and 984

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Brief description of cause:

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

 CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION
UNDER F.R.C.P. 23

DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:
JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE _____

DOCKET NUMBER _____

DATE

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

04/04/2019

s/SCOTT J. CAMPBELL

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT #

AMOUNT

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN
AT LAW AND IN ADMIRALTY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case No.

APPROXIMATELY \$13,800.00 IN UNITED
STATES CURRENCY FROM TD BANK
ACCOUNT ENDING IN 8567,

Defendant.

WARRANT FOR ARREST IN REM

To: THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
Eastern District of Wisconsin

WHEREAS, a Verified Complaint for Civil Forfeiture *in rem* was filed on the 4th day of April, 2019, by the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, which seeks the forfeiture of the above-named defendant pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981(a)(1)(C) and 984, and which prays that process issue to enforce the forfeiture and to give notice to all interested parties to appear before the court and show cause why the forfeiture should not be decreed; and due proceedings being had, that the defendant property be condemned and forfeited to the use of the United States of America.

YOU ARE THEREFORE HEREBY COMMANDED to attach and arrest the defendant property, approximately \$13,800.00 in United States currency, which was seized on or about February 15, 2019, from TD Bank account ending in 8567 held in the name of Easy Freight Shippers LLC, and which is presently in the custody of the United States Secret Service in

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, and to detain the same until further order of this Court.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2019, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

STEPHEN C. DRIES
Clerk of Court

By:

Deputy Clerk

Return

This warrant was received and executed with the arrest of the above-named defendant.

Date warrant received: _____

Date warrant executed: _____

Name and title of arresting officer: _____

Signature of arresting officer: _____

Date: _____